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DISCOURSE

Concerning the
Confusion of Languages

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B A B E L;

Proving it to have been miraculous,
from the Essential Difference be-
tween them, contrary to the Opi-
nion of Mons. *Le Clerc*, and others.

With an ENQUIRY into the
PRIMITIVE LANGUAGE,
Before that
Wonderful EVENT.

By the late learned
WILLIAM WOTTON, D. D.

Now first publish'd from his Original Manuscript.

L O N D O N:

Printed for S. AUSTEN at the *Angel* and *Bible* in
St. Paul's Church-Yard; and W. BOWYER, in
White-Fryars. MDCCXXX.

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DISCOURSE

Concerning the

Confusion of LANGUAGES, &c.

To *John Chamberlayne, Esq;*

SIR,



THE News which you tell me, that we shall at last see your noble Collection of *Lord's Prayers* in more Languages, and more exactly copy'd, than any Collection which has yet appeared, is very agreeable: And I cannot but congratulate you for the Applause which you will meet withal from

B

competent

competent Judges upon that Account. I say from *competent Judges*, for from others you must expect either to be censured for taking a great deal of useless Pains, or not to be regarded, which is almost equally grievous to an ingenuous Mind. The Bulk of Men, as well of those who are, as of those who would pass for Scholars, measure Learning by the immediate and visible Utility which it brings along with it; and tho' it was *Ignoramus* in the Play who said he studied only *Artes parcas & lucrosas*, yet in Truth the Disease spreads a great deal farther, and you shall very rarely see a Scholar that will set a great Value upon any Part of Learning in which he himself has made no Proficiency. The Divine asks the Mathematician, who is drawing Diagrams and making long and intricate Calculations to find out the Powers and Properties of some nameless Curve, *cui bono* is all this? What good will it do you or any Man else to know the *Area* of this *Superficies*, or the *Ratio* which it bears to another which you have been describing but just before? Do you think that what you expect to find will answer the Pains, and Study, and Time which you spend about it? The Mathematician asks him in Requital, what good it will do him or any Man else, to know the Opinion of this obscure Father, or that perplexed Schoolman? The Chronologer shall spend Months in fixing the *AEra* of such a City in *Syria*, or of such a Kingdom in *Thrace* or *Pontus*; and when

when he has done, scarce a hundred Men perhaps in *Europe* will read what he has writ. The Geographer labours to ascertain the Situation and Bounds of a City or Countrey, named two or three Times in some dark Author, and perhaps no where else in all Antiquity; and when he has done it, how few care whether there was ever such a City, or such an Author that mentions it? The Astronomer wasts his Health in making Observations in Order to perfect the Catalogue, and determine the Latitude of the fix'd Stars; and tho' it is possible that he may meet with some more Applause than the Gentlemen I last named, yet how very few are there who will, or can profit by his Labours? Those that cannot, will comfort themselves as the Man did, who was told that a certain Performance of his was bald and jejune, and wanted Metaphors and other Ornaments of Rhetoric to set it off, *Possumus vivere sine illis*. And the Critic, because he sets up for a better Judgment, or at least for using it to better Purpose than other Men, in determining the true Reading, or explaining the Difficulties which are to be met with in any Passage of an ancient Author, must expect to be censured (if not derided) by the Generality of his Readers, who are inwardly angry that he should pretend to see farther than themselves into the Sense and Elegancy of the Books they read. The *Succus Loliginis*, and the *Ærugo mera* which *Horace* complains of, the *Moth* and *Rust* of

Envy, is often discernible in the Writings of those who otherwise are the best natured Men; when they think themselves to be the freest, and the most unbiass'd, they are many Times the most deeply tinged; and when they are so, like *Iſteric* Persons, they see every Thing dy'd with that Colour with which their Eyes, and not the Objects, had been before infected.

These, Sir, are melancholy Reflections, and such as keep back a World of People from labouring to excel in any Part of Learning that does not bring in immediate Profit. Whoever would do that, must be contented to bear with the Jest of those who set up for the great Masters of polite Learning, and who by the Help of *Dictionaries*, *Prefaces*, *Translations*, and *Abridgements*, (which are a sort of *Hot Beds* to raise Scholars in) dictate to those who know less than themselves, and so pass for able Men.

But I confess it has been a Rule with me, that Truth, as such, without any View to the immediate Application, is worth knowing; and tho' I am not obliged to take Pains to know it my self, yet I praise those that do, and desire them to commit their Observations to Writing; for tho' perhaps I can make no Use of them, yet others may. I am confirmed very much in this Opinion, by a Story I heard many Years ago of the famous *Galileo*, which I shall here take the Freedom of telling you.

Galileo

Galileo being one Day at Mass, and not very attent at his Devotions, observed that a strong Gust of Wind, set the Branches, which hung in the Church at several Lengths and of several Magnitudes, to hold the Candles during the Service, in Motion to and fro with some Violence, and, as he thought, with different Velocities, according to the Length of the Rods by which they were fastened to the Roof of the Church. This Meditation employed him whilst he was at Mass, and when he went home he fastened Threads of several Lengths at one End to small Balls of Wood, and at the other End to a Pole which went cross his Chamber, and then put them into Motion in Order to observe the Times of their Vibration. And from many Experiments of the Vibrations of those Pendulums of different Weights and different Lengths he discovered at last such Propositions relating to oscillatory Motions, as enabled Mr. *Huygens*, and the Artificers to whom he first gave the Hint, to bring those Engines by which we measure Time with so much Accuracy, Pleasure and Advantage, to that surprising Exactness in which we now see them.

Now I would ask most Men, if they had by Chance surpriz'd *Galileo* tossing those Balls fastened by Strings of various Lengths to a long Pole cross his Room, and observing their several Vibrations, whether they would not have thought him mad. The gravest Spectators
would

would have believed themselves to be very candid, if they had pass'd it off with a Smile. And yet we see what those Play-Things, fit only, as one would think, to amuse Children, produced.

I expect now, Sir, that you should ask what all this tends to; I will tell you: Your Collection of *Lord's Prayers* in so many different Languages, some dead, some living, some ancient, some modern, which so few Scholars, comparatively speaking, would judge to be worth the Pains, and Study and Expense that you have been at to collect, led me to think that the famous Problem concerning the Confusion of Languages that happened among the Workmen of the Tower of *Babel*, might by comparing many Languages together, be determined even to a Demonstration; and that by knowing the Succession of those Tongues, with which we are in some tolerable Measure acquainted, and comparing their several Characteristicks by which they are essentially and formally distinguished from one another, we may come to know, whether God did then miraculously create new Tongues, and so consequently force those Workmen to separate for want of understanding what each other said, or whether he only made them quarrel, and thereby induced them to part, and so leave their Work unfinished. The first of these Solutions is most agreeable to the Text; and is for that Reason embraced by the Generality of

Inter-

* Vid
Hebraea

Interpreters both *Christian* and *Jewish* ^a, and the latter has been espoused by several very good and religious, as well as very learned and ingenious Men; who look upon it to be equally the Work of God, whether they quarrelled with one another by his Command, or parted for want of Understanding one another's Speech.

The former of these Opinions is what I shall endeavour to make good. If I do it, it will, as I apprehend, be no Disservice to Religion, for Reasons which I shall at large deduce in the Detail of this Discourse.

To save the Labour of turning to the History in the xith of *Genesis*, I shall set it down at Length. *And the whole Earth was of one Language, and of one Speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the East, that they found a Plain in the Land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make Brick, and burn them thoroughly: And they had Brick for Stone, and Slime had they for Mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a City and a Tower, whose Top may reach to Heaven, and let us make us a Name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the Face of the whole Earth. And the LORD came down to see the City and the Tower, which the Children of Men builded. And the LORD said, Behold the People is one, and they have all*

^a Vide Johannis Buxtorfii F. Dissertationem de Linguae Hebraeae confusione, & plurium Linguarum origine.

one Language; and this they begin to do; and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their Language, that they may not understand one another's Speech. So the LORD scattered them Abroad from thence, upon the Face of all the Earth; and they left off to build the City. Therefore is the Name of it called Babel, because the LORD did there confound the Language of all the Earth; and from thence did the LORD scatter them Abroad upon the Face of all the Earth; Gen. xi. 1,—9.

Among others, Mr. Le Clerc strenuously opposes the Opinion for which I declare, and says that the Hebrew Word שפה *Shaphah*, which we render *Language* (or *Lip* as it is in the Margin of the Bibles) does not necessarily imply *Language*, but rather *Agreement* or *Confederacy* and *Partnership*, and that the latter was more necessary than the former. ^b This

^b Notum est *Labium* significare hic & in seqq. *Sermonem*? quod *Labia* non minori sint ad loquendum usui, quam *Lingua*. Vide & *Es. xix. 18*. Erat certe una, tunc temporis, *Lingua*, sed an illa *ἁμοφωνία* hic potissimum spectetur, non liquet. Forte haec verba homines concordēs egisse ante omnia significant, quia ad unam civitatem condendam, haud paullo magis necessaria est concordia quam *Sermonis* similitudo; nec *Hebraicae Linguae* idioma hanc interpretationem respuit. Sic ad significandum *Chananaeorum*, in propulsandis bello *Israëlitis*, consensum, *Jos. ix. 2*. *Atque una convenerunt*, ait sacra *Historia*, ad bellandum cum *Josua*, & cum *Israële*, ORE

he

he endeavours to prove from *Isa. xix. 18.*
*In that Day shall five Cities in the Land of
 Egypt speak the Language (or Lip as it is in
 the Margin) of Canaan, and swear to the LORD
 of Hosts. Speaking the Language of Canaan*
 implies (says he) no more than being of the
 same Religion with the *Jews* who inhabited
 the Land of *Canaan*. But why may it not
 be interpreted literally as it is in our Version?
 Does any absurd Sense arise from that Inter-
 pretation? Might not those five Cities particu-
 larly, to shew the Value and Reverence that
 they had for the Religion of the *Jews*, learn
 their Language, especially since they would be
 thereby better enabled to understand the Books
 of *Moses* and the Prophets, which were writ-
 ten in that Tongue? Do not the *Mahometans*
 wherever they are, *Turks, Tartars, Persians,*
Moguls or *Mores*, all learn *Arabic*; because
Mahomet writ the *Alcoran* in that Language?
 The Sense to which he would confine the Words
 of the Prophet, is low and flat in Comparison
 of this literal one, and any one that reads the
 whole Chapter must I think conclude so. *In
 that Day Egypt shall be like unto Women, it*

UNO פה אחד *phe ehhad.* Consentientes Pseudo-pro-
 phetae ore uno bonum pollicentur, 1 Reg. xxii. 13. Hinc
 labio alicujus loqui perinde est ac consentire, quod con-
 stat ex loco Esaiæ allato: *Die illo erunt quinque Urbes in
 AEgypto loquentes labium Chanaan, & jurantes per Jehovah
 Deum exercituum;* hoc est, idem sentientes cum He-
 braeis, qui Chanaanitidem incolebant. Clericus in Gen.
 xi. 1.

shall be afraid and fear; because of the shaking of the Hand of the LORD of Hosts, which he shaketh over it, & 16. And the Land of Judah shall be a Terror unto Egypt, & 17. And again in the 19th Verse. In that Day shall there be an Altar to the LORD, in the midst of the Land of Egypt. They shall become Profelytes to the Law of Moses, and that they may not mistake in understanding the Sense of the Law, which they shall then embrace, they will agree to learn that Language in which it is written. This I take to be the true meaning of the Place.

But we read, *Josh. ix. 2.* That the Kings of Canaan gathered themselves together to fight with Joshua, and with Israel with one Accord; what we render with *one Accord*, in the Hebrew is *one Mouth*; and so it is noted in the Margin of our Bibles. So also the false Prophets promised Ahab Success, פה אחד *phe ehhad* with *one Mouth*, i. e. *unanimously*, when he went against Ramoth Gilead, 1 Kings xxii. 13. *Phe ehhad* has no Preposition affixed to it in *Josh. ix. 2.* which shews that the two Words so joined, are to be understood adverbially, and governed by a Verb either express'd, as it is there, or necessarily and plainly understood, as it is in 1 Kings xxii. 13. and consequently have no Relation to *Shaphah*, (*Lip*) here in *Moses*. I would not accuse Mr. *Le Clerc* of Malignity here, as if he brought these Quotations to destroy the Miracle; but I cannot acquit him of Negligence,

Negligence, when he thought that his Interpretation of *Shaphab ebbad*, *one Lip* or *Language* in this Place, could be strengthened by this *Pbe ebbad*, which is always used adverbially, for what in *English* we call *unanimously*, or *with one Accord*. For though *Shaphab*, *Lip*, is figuratively used for *Language* in *Hebrew*, yet it does not follow that *Pbe*, *Mouth*, should be so too; and in Fact it is not; or that, because *one Mouth* may in that Tongue be metaphorically and adverbially used for *one Accord*, therefore *one Lip* should have the same Sense: I believe he will hardly shew us one single Instance, but this in *Isaiah*, (which we have no Reason to give up, and by what *Moses* says, *Gen. xi. 7.* it appears ought not to be given up) in which *one Lip* properly signifies, *not a mutual Agreement*, or *one Mind* of many Men who join in the same Undertaking, but one Language which all they spoke, who joyned together in that Design. And this I think is sufficient to destroy his Interpretation, and what I believe he will yield to, especially since he does not in the least disbelieve the Power of God to work this Miracle, no more than his Power of teaching *Adam* and *Eve* to speak at first, or of inspiring the Apostles with the Gift of Languages at the great Pentecost in the second Chapter of the *Acts*.

This certainly was the Reason why so many of the ancient Interpreters, both *Jews* and

Christians understood this Confusion of *Babel*, to be a Confusion of Languages, not Opinions. They saw the Text, if literally understood, required it: They observed a surprising Variety of Tongues, essentially different from one another. And they knew that this was not in the least inconsistent with the Power of God. They did not question, but that he that made the Tongue, could make it speak what and how he pleased, and they acquiesced as all wise and honest Interpreters ought to do, in the literal Explication, seeing that nothing unworthy of God, or in itself either impossible or trifling, resulted from that Interpretation.

But it is here objected, that we need not recur to a Miracle, since a bare Separation of these Workmen, and a subsequent Settlement in very distant Regions, where all mutual Commerce and Intercourse was destroyed, would be sufficient. We see in a thousand Years what Alterations and Deviations have been made from the *Latin* in *France*, *Italy*, *Spain*, and the *Subalpine* Regions. In *France* the *Gascon*, and *Provençal* Dialects are hardly understood at *Paris*; and the Language of their Poets still extant in those Dialects, is more different from the common *French*, by great odds, ^c than *Chaucer's* Idiom is from *Waller's* or *Prior's*. In *Spain*, besides the *Castilian*, there are two large and copious Idioms, the

^c See the *Recueil des Poëtes Gascons*, printed at *Amsterdam* in 1700.

Portuguese and the *Catalan*, neither of which are readily intelligible, especially the *Portuguese*, by one that knows only the Third. A Man may know all the rest of the Dialects that are derived from the *Latin*, and yet be wholly to seek in the *Grisons* Language. And yet all these Tongues, which have each one their particular Marks, which Marks are plainly different from each other, and some of them very widely too, owe their Original within twelve hundred Years to the *Latin*; and besides, there has always been a mutual Commerce and Intercourse between these several Nations, which derive their Languages from the same common Stock. In the Languages which are derived from the *Teutonic*, there has happen'd full as great a Variation in the same compass of Time: How different is the ancient *Saxon* in *Ælfred's* Time, from the Language about the Time of *Hen. II.* And that from the Language of *Pierce Plowman* or *Chaucer*? And their Idiom from ours? An *Englishman* cannot understand a *Hollander*; nor he a *Saxon*; nor any of them a *Swede* or a *Dane*. The *Islandish* (or the old *Norns*, or *Norwegian* Language) which is the Mother of the *Danish* and *Swedish* Idioms, is not intelligible now without Study, by a Native of *Copenhagen* or *Stockholm*. The Fragments of the Gospels, published by *Junius*, are written in a different Dialect from the *Francic* of *Willeram* and *Otfrid*, and their Tongue differs as much from

from the modern *German*, though these are most probably but so many Derivations from the old *German* Language that was spoken in *Julius Caesar's* Time. The Instances I give have all of them been certainly and exactly traced, and such as we are sure of. If then, say those who think that this Confusion was not miraculous, such Alterations are actually visible in Dialects which have been formed from Languages still extant, in so few Years, what may we reasonably suppose to have been in Languages that existed above three Thousand Years ago? Especially when Men were so totally divided from one another, as we may imagine the first Inhabitants of this Globe to have been after that great Dispersion.

This Objection is, as I take it, fairly stated. The Fact is certainly true; and yet even this to me is a convincing Argument that the first Confusion was miraculous. For, 1. we see in all these Instances, manifest Deviations from one common Original, tho' not all from the same. Your Specimens of the *Lord's Prayers* shew that the *French, Grison, Catalan, Portugueze, Italian, and Castillan* Tongues, all come from the *Latin*; and we see there a common Mother to them all, which Mother is certainly two Thousand Years old. The same is visible in the *Teutonic* or *Gothic*, and its Subdivisions, tho' we have but slender Remains, (scarce any, unless we may reckon some Monuments written in the *Runic* Character, which have been published

published by *Wormius* and *Verelius*) of any of those Languages that are so ancient as the Hea-then Writers of old *Rome*. And there are several such common Originals in the World. So that though this will invincibly prove the Gradation and Derivation of different Dialects from a common Stock, yet it will not prove the actual Formation of some essentially different Tongues which I here contend for. But then, 2. we see other Languages, which tho' they may have some few Words in common, yet have a quite distinct Frame and Make from many others; and this Frame and Make runs thro', and is manifestly visible in their Subdivisions, and has been so from all Antiquity.

The clearing of this Proposition will fully explain what I have to say, and will, if I mistake not, sufficiently prove my Assertion, which in general is, that some Languages, (I enquire not how many) were formed at once at the Confusion of *Babel*, by the same Almighty Hand that taught *Adam* and *Eve* to speak at the Creation, and impowered the Apostles to speak with new Tongues at the great Pentecost.

To understand this Notion of mine the better, I must crave Leave to enlarge upon what I apprehend to be the *Matter*, and what the *Form* of every Language. The *Matter* of every Tongue are the Words by which the Men that speak that Tongue express their Ideas. An *Englishman*, says *Man*, when he would name
a Crea-

a Creature of the same Species with himself. A Roman would say *Vir*, or *Homo*; a Greek, ἄνθρωπος; an Hebrew, *Ish*. This I call *Material* in these Languages. But the several Ways by which these Nouns are declined, is what I call *formal* in these several Tongues. The *Latins* and *Greeks* vary their Nouns by Terminations, as *Vir*, *Viri*, *Viro*, *Virum*. ἄνθρωπος, ἄνθρωποι, ἄνθρωπον, ἄνθρωποι. So did the antient *Germans*, *Saxons* and *Danes*; since the *Norman* Invasion we have shortened our Nouns, and what the *Romans* and *Greeks* call the *Nominative Case*, denotes now with us the whole Noun, as it always did in the East. We decline by the Prepositions *to*, *from*, *of*, *the*, in both Numbers. The *Hebrews* have no different Termination in the same Number, but only vary thus, *Ish*, *Man*, *Ishim*, *Men*; *Ishah*, *Woman*, *Ishoth*, *Women*. The rest is varied by Prepositions inseparably affixed to the Words, as *Ha-ish*, *the Man*; *Le-ish*, *to the Man*; *Be-ish*, *in the Man*; and the like. These Prepositions thus joined make one Word with the Noun to which they are affixed; which Way of altering the Signification by these single Letters (for the Vowels in *Ha*, *Le*, *Be*, stand for nothing) which answer the End of entire Words in other Languages, is peculiar to those Eastern Tongues which have an Affinity with the *Hebrew*, and is no where seen in the Languages which come from a *Latin* or *Teutonic* Original.

Original. In this Manner are Nouns which are Names of Things declined.

In the Way of declining and conjugating Verbs, this Difference between the *Eastern* and *Western* Languages will appear yet more surprizingly. Verbs may in general be defined to be Names of *Action*, or *Passion*, or *Quality*, as moveable; or actually in Motion or at Rest; as *I strike*, *I am struck*, *I love*, *I stand*, and the like. Whether this Definition be full, it matters not now to examine. It is enough to me that I am understood. And since a Verb in its Nature implies Motion or a Capacity to move, or be moved, or to be at Rest, it is manifest that it may be considered, as past, present, or to come, to which Head all the other Alterations may be reduced. Now nothing can be conceived more different than the Way of inflecting Verbs used by the *Eastern Nations*, and those of the *West* and *North*. All the *Western* and *Northern* People, whose Languages I have had an Opportunity to consult, consider every transitive Verb either actively or passively, and then they have done; *Amo* in *Latin* is *I love*; *Amor* *I am loved*. So in *Greek* ἀγαπάω & ἀγαπῶμαι. And whether we form our Verbs with others that are Auxiliaries, as all the Languages that come from the antient *Celtic* and *Teutonic* seem to do, and as the *Romans* did in some of the Tenses of the Passive Voice, ^d yet still we consider a Transitive Verb

^d As, *Amatus sum vel fui*, *I have been loved*, *amatus ero vel fuero*, *I shall be loved*, &c.

only as it is *Active* or *Passive*; and *Substantive* Verbs, and those which the *Latins* call *Neuters* and *Deponents* are formed after the same Manner.

But the *Eastern Nations* have a Method of forming Verbs which is essentially distinct from these, by which every Verb is formed in all their Languages. By *Eastern Nations* here I mean those, and only those, whose Languages have both in Matter and Form, so great an Affinity with the *Hebrew*, that they are generally supposed to be immediately derived from it.

In *Hebrew* the Way of forming Verbs is this. Every Verb has, (or is supposed to have) what their Grammarians call seven Conjugations. Three active ones, *Kal*, *Piel*, and *Hipbil*; three passive ones, *Niphal*, *Pual*, and *Hophal*; and one reciprocal one which they call *Hithpael*. *Pakad*, for Instance, *he barely visited*, in *Kal*; *Nipbkad*, *he was barely visited*, in *Niphal*; *Pikked*, *he visited diligently*, in *Piel*; *Pukkad*, *he was visited diligently*, in *Pual*; *Hipbkid*, *he made or caused to visit*, in *Hipbil*; *Hopbkad*, *he made or caused to be visited*, in *Hophal*; *Hithpakked*, *he visited himself*, in *Hithpael*. Every one of these Conjugations has its *preterperfect* and *future* Tenses distinct by itself, with its own *Participles*, *Imperative* and *Infinitive* Moods, all which are distinguished from each other, by servile Letters which are easily discerned by those that are but moderately

ly versed in the Language; and are therefore usually omitted in all their Dictionaries, where only the radical Consonants, which are rarely more than three (Vowels in this Case not being minded) are alphabetically set down. All these Conjugations have each their determinate Sense; tho' perhaps in every Verb not just those which I have already specified.

The *Chaldean* and *Syriac* Languages form their Verbs much after the same Manner; only they have but six of these Conjugations, whereas the *Hebrew* has seven.

The *Arabians* * have diversified these Conjugations to the Number of thirteen. These all vary in Signification, and are not, no more than the *Hebrew*, all used in one and the same Verb, but some in one Verb, and some in another. It may not be unpleasant to see the Manner of them, as it is described by their Grammarians, in the Conjugations of the Verb *Phabala*, *he made*, which they usually make their Paradigm, as our Grammarians do *Amo*, *Doceo*, *Lego* and *Audio*.

Here then I, The Root it self *Phabala*, † de-

* These Conjugations are as radical Notes in Musick, which are 13 in Number, as in this *Arabic* Verse.

بلا لا فت-تنت و خلاص

Wâlâmâ phâtânâtsâ Bêlâdsâ Ælâhò.

† It may be questioned whether our *Fa-la*- in Musick comes not from the *Arabic* *Phaala* *فعل* *to make*, and so

notes the bare Action without any Reference or View to any Thing else, *He made*. II, *Phabbala*, and IV, *Apbbala* signify a Change of an absolute Verb into a transitive one. Thus *Hbazana* is *He was sorry*. But *Hbazana* and *Abzana* are, *he made sorry*. In Verbs that are originally Transitives, these Conjugations make the Signification more intense than it was at first. So *dharaba*, *he beat with a Cudgel*; *Dharraba*, and *adhraba*, *he caused to be beat with a Cudgel*. III. *Phâbala*, implies Reaction, and supposes two Substantives, as, *Batroso dhâraba Baulosa*, *Peter beat Paul, and was beaten again*, where *Peter* is supposed to strike first. So in Neuters, *Batrofokâbada Baulosa*. *Peter sat down by Paul, and he sat down by Peter*. VI. *Taphâbala* signifies such a Cooperation as the *Latins* express by the Preposition *con*, as *Tadhâraba Batroso wa Bauloso*, *Peter and Paul beat one another*. V. *Taphabbala*. VII. *Inphabala*. VIII. *Iphtabala*, are absolute Passives. The V. and VII. come from the II. as *Hallamtobo*, *wabowa taballama*, *I taught him, and he was taught*. The VIII. from the I. as *Katsarto dalika phâktatsara*, *I shortened this, and it was shortened*. IX. *Ipbhalla*, and XI. *Ipbhâlla* relate to Intension of Colours; as, *Itspbarra*, *he was very yellow*; *Itspbârra*, *he was most extra-*

owe its Rise to the *Arabic* Conjugations, which are Musical Notes. And in their *Dirges* they often use the Musical Note *هزنا* *Hazana* to mourn.

ordinarily yellow; and to Verbs of Deformity, as *Idbjamma*, and *Idbjamma*, his Mouth was awry more or less. *Istapbhala* relates to begging any Thing. As, *Istathama*, he asked for Food, from *tahama*, to taste. XII. *Ipbhaubala*, and XIII. *Ipbhawwala*, which are very rarely used, signify great Intension; as *Ihlaulata*, and *Iblatwata*, from *Halata*, he adhered strongly.

This is the Method by which all their trilateral Verbs are formed. For here also as in Hebrew, the Consonants only are regarded. They have also a quadrilateral Form, whose Conjugations are altered after this Manner. I. *Phablala*. II. *Taphablala*. III. *Ipbhanlala*. VI. *Ipbhalalla*. Every one of these Conjugations has its own *Preterperfects*, *Futures*, *Imperatives*, *Participles* and *Infinitives*.

Now as the *English* Verb *Drub*, comes from the *Arabic* *Dharaba*, so we form it our own Way; to *drub*, to be *drubbed*, *drubbing*, and the like. And if there were such a *Latin* Verb as *darabo*, the passive would be *darabor*; and it would be formed accordingly. In short every Nation takes the Word which it adopts into its own Language, and alters and forms it after its own Model; and from that Model, more than from the Words which it has in common with other Languages, we are to judge of its Original, and perhaps of its Antiquity. In a Word, the essential Difference of one Language from another, is to be taken from their

their respective *Grammars*, rather than from their *Vocabularies*.

These are some of the principal Characteristics, by which the *Hebrew* and its Kindred-Tongues differ from the *Greek* and the *Latin*, and the Languages that are derived from the *Teutonic* Stock.

Another Mark of Distinction, in which the *Eastern* Tongues all agree, is, that they have no Verbs, that are compounded with Prepositions in such a Manner as to accompany them in all their Moods and Tenses by which their Signification may be vary'd. Their Verbs are all simple, and though they may, and very often have in *Arabic* especially, many and those very different Significations; some literal, some figurative; yet still the Verbs themselves are not compounded; and the same too holds in the Nouns, whereas in the *Western* Languages it is quite otherwise. An Instance in both fully explain my Meaning. In *Hebrew* *Satahb* is the Verb which is used in your *Specimen of the Lord's Prayer*, for *forgiving*. *Shabak* in *Chaldee*. The same in *Syriac*. *Gi-afara* in *Arabic*. These are all original and uncompounded Verbs. On the contrary in *Greek*, the Verb for forgiving is ἀφίημι, from ἵημι, to send, and ἀπό, away. To send away, to dismiss, and metaphorically to forgive. In the modern *Greek* it is the same, only in some Dialects, it is συγχωρεῖν, which is compounded

pounded from *εὖ* and *χαρῆναι*. In *Latin* to *forgive* is express'd by *dimitto*, and *remitto*, both compounded from *mitto*, to *send*, and *re*, which in Composition signifies *back*; or *di* a Contraction of *dis*, which in Composition signifies something that may be divided in order to parting asunder, which by an easy Metaphor will agree with our Notion of *forgiving*. Pursuant to this Pattern, all the modern Languages which come from *Latin*, use compounded Verbs upon Occasion, as readily as they do simple Ones. The Word *Pardon*, which runs through most of them, comes from *Perdonare*, which is compounded of *donare*, to *give*, and *per*, which in Composition often signifies *thoroughly*, and thereby heightens the Sense of the simple Verb. In Languages derived from the *Teutonic*, it is the same; in the *Anglo-Saxon*, it is *forgyf*. In *Islandish*, *Fiergeff*. In *Junius's Gospels* (which you know the great Restorer of the Northern Learning in *Europe*; Dr. *Hickes*, thinks was written in the Lan-

* In the Collection of *Lord's Prayers*, which was printed at *London* by Mr. *Motte*, in the Year 1700, I find a Copy of the *Lord's Prayer* which he calls *Graeca Barbara*, which is different in many Things from the others in the *modern Greek*, which he there produces. There *ευχόμεσθε* is put for *forgive*; and *αἰχοεῖσθε* for *we forgive*. Allowing it to be truly printed, though there must be a Fault in one of them, then *αἰχοεῖσθε*, or *ευχόμεσθε* must have been corrupted from the common Word *ευχαριστεῖν*.

guage

guage of the old *Germans*) it is *aflet*, and that also is compounded of *letan*, *to let go*, *to dismiss*, and *af* which in Composition answers to our *off*, or *away*. And your Collection of Lord's Prayers will shew us, that the later Dialects which spring from the same *Japhetic* Stock compound their Verbs after the same Manner, which none of those Languages, that I have mentioned as having Affinity with the *Hebrew*, ever do.

Another observable in which these several Sets of Tongues, as I may call them, differ from each other, though they all agree with their common Roots, is in the Use of their possessive Pronouns, when affixed to their Nouns. As thus, *Ab* in *Hebrew* is *Father*. *Abi*, *my Father*. *Abinu*, *our Father*. In *Chaldee* from the same Root, *Abouna*, is *our Father*. In *Syriac* it is *Abun*. In *Arabic* and *Æthiopic* the same. In this Manner when any Pronoun is possessively joined to a Noun, as *my*, *thy*, *his*, *yours*, *theirs*, they constitute in a regular and ordinary Manner one Word with the Word with which they are joined, by being added to the End of the Noun. These Pronouns are put to the End of the Nouns, as most Prepositions and some Conjunctions are prefix'd to those Nouns and Verbs that want them. Whereas in the *Greek* both ancient and barbarous, in the *Latin* and the Dialects which arise from it, and in all the Branches of what I call the old *Teutonic*, these possessive Pronouns make a distinct

distinct Word from the Noun with which they are joined. As Πατήρ ἡμῶν, *Pater noster*, *Atta unsar*, *Fader vor*, *Vater unser*, *Our Father*. Nor have these Languages any Thing which exactly answers to the Prepositions and Conjunctions which are prefixed to Verbs and Nouns in those *Eastern Languages*.

Another remarkable Particular, in which these *Western Tongues* all agree, is, the marking the Degrees of Comparison of their Adjectives by proper Terminations, as *wise*, *wiser*, *wisest*; *sapiens*, *sapientior*, *sapientissimus*; σοφός, σοφώτερος, σοφώτατος. None of the *Eastern Tongues* already mentioned have any Thing like this. In my Opinion this is no mean Proof that the Race of *Japhet*, from whom all these Nations spring, had distinct Languages agreeing in some common Marks, as well as distinct Lands assigned them about this Time. And here I would take Leave to observe, what I shall speak to more at large hereafter, that as we see these fundamental Characteristics in these two great Branches, so they do not lessen or dwindle away as these Dialects increase. The Words indeed vary by which they are express'd; but the Things themselves, those constituent Parts of their *substantial Forms*, (which however ill they may sound in *Physics*, will pass well enough in *Grammar*) still remain among them all. Be it *Kal* and *Niphal* in *Hebrew*, *Peal* and *Ithpeel* in *Chaldee*, *Phabala* and *Phaballa* in *Arabic*, it

is all one, the different Ways of conjugating their Verbs, which I have already described, run thro' them all. Whereas none of these *Western* Tongues regard any Thing more in their Verbs, than *Active*, or *Passive*, or *Neuter*, which is in Truth something between them both, and is always formed either like an *Active* or like a *Passive*; and so consequently differs rather in the Sense than in the Formation. This will go a good Way towards answering the Proposition, which *Stiernhielm* lays down as the Foundation of his whole Discourse, that all the Languages of the Descendents of *Noah*, were originally but one, to which one they may be all at last reduced. If I should enter now into a longer Enumeration of Particulars upon this Head, I should tire other Readers, and should be very impertinent towards you, Sir, whose great and diffusive Skill in so many and so various Languages makes you a better Judge of this Question, than almost any Man I ever knew.

You will agree therefore, Sir, with me in this, that it is upon the Account of these common Marks, that Grammarians have been able to make Grammars that have been intelligible and methodical, of several of these Languages together, in which these Variations have been clearly represented. Of this Sort is that excellent Grammar which *Ludovicus de Dieu* has composed for *Hebrew*, *Chaldee* and *Syriac*. Whereas if one should try to make what I

would

would call a *Concordantial Grammar* of *Greek* and *Arabic*, he would soon see that he did ἀσύγκλωσα κλάθειν, put Things together which are wholly incompatible, and he would then perceive that there are indeed in both Languages Words, and great Variety of them, to express our Meaning by; but that these Words are (generally speaking) as differently framed in Order to form those Expressions, as it is possible for the Mind of Man to conceive they should.

If now, Sir, I have made my self understood I am satisfied. You see what I drive at; I have had no Assistance from the Writings of any of those that have gone before me that I have seen. If any Man will recur to the Objection which I first started, and bid me compare the Dialects of the *Latin*, the *Greek*, or the *German*, and send me up to Time, as if that were sufficient to produce these or greater Changes; I shall refer my self to what *Stiernhielm* himself is forced to own in his Discourse concerning the *Original and Progress of Tongues*, prefixed to the Edition of *Junius's Gospels*, commonly called the *Gothic*, compared with the *Islandish*, the *Swedish*, and the *Latin*, which was printed at *Stockholm* in 1671. by the *College of Antiquities*, which the late King of *Sweden* erected some Years before. For there, after he has laboured to prove that the Languages of *Europe*, *Asia* and *Africa*, were originally one, and to that one may be still redu-

ced, and consequently differ from one another, no otherwise than as the common and natural Changes which Time has necessarily introduced in three or four Thousand Years, he is forced to add, that he would be understood only of those Languages which are derived from that which was spoken by *Adam*, and *Noah*, that are in Use in *Asia*, *Europe* and *Africa*: For as for the Languages of *America*, and the Islands in the *Indies*, he gives them up, and allows that there are no Footsteps of any Coherence or Agreement between these Languages, and those spoken upon our Continent. Which (says he) has made some rashly to imagine, that the Men that speak those Tongues are a Species by themselves, and not Descendants of *Adam*, the common Parent of us all^h.

This strange Concession from a Man whom I see no Reason to suspect of Irreligion, goes a great Way to prove my Position, especially

^h Unum solummodo, Lectorem non iniquum admonitum volo, me hinc non alias Linguas intelligere, quam quae ex Adamaea seu Noachica originem ducunt, & in Orbe cognito, *b. e.* Asia, Africa, & Europa in usu sunt, aut fuerunt. Quo Americanas, & in Indiis Insulanas, ut hodie sunt, omnino excludo: quippe in quibus nec rationis, nec cohaerentiae, aut cognationis ullum vestigium, deprehendo. Unde nonnulli, licet temere, suspicantur, hominum illorum speciem, in propria potius Terra factam aut exortam, quam ex Adami traduce natam. *Stierpbielmii Praefat. in Evangg. Ulfilae. pag. 4.*

seeing

seeing it comes from one who by his great Skill in Languages, both ancient and modern, was very well qualified to judge of this Question.

And now, Sir, I shall venture to lay down my Proposition at Length. It is this: *That there was but one Language in the World, when the Progeny of Noah went down into the Valley of Shinaar to build the City and Tower of Babel; and that then, as Moses literally informs us, there was a Confusion of Tongues inflicted upon the Workmen by the immediate Hand of God, so that they could not understand one anothers Speech; and that upon that Confusion there were new Languages instantly framed, which Languages have been the Roots and Originals from which the several Dialects that are, or have been, or will be spoken, as long as this Earth shall last, have arisen, and to which they may with Ease be reduced.*

Here I beg Leave to enlarge upon what I just hinted at already, which is, that these general Marks, which run through all these Tongues, and which truly separate the *Eastern* from the *Western* Languages, have none of them disappeared, or been shifted from one to the other, for near three Thousand Years. They appear in every Book of the Old Testament, from *Moses* down to *Malachi*; in the *Chaldee* Paraphrasts, in the *Syriac* Versions of the Bible, and Liturgies; in the *Misna*, and the *Gemara*; and in every other *Rabbinical* Book

Book (as far at least as I can judge by Citations) from the *Misna*, which I take to be the most ancient Book next the Bible in the *Hebrew* Language, down to those *Jewish* Writers, who to this Day swarm in *Holland*, and *Germany*, and *Poland*, and *Turkey*. All the Marks of the *Arabic* Language before specified, are observable in the *Alcoran*, which is about eleven Hundred Years old, and may undoubtedly be found in every other *Arabic* Book that has been written since.

On the other Side consider *Homer's* Poems (which are the oldest Monuments that we have of the *Greek* Language;) take *Theocritus* for the *Doric* Dialect, *Euripides* or *Thucydides* for the *Attic*, *Herodotus* or *Hippocrates* for the *Ionic*, *Sappho* for the *Æolic*; and come downwards to the modern *Greek* now spoken in those once flourishing Regions, and you will see the general Marks of these *Japhetic* Languages run through them all. These Idioms shew themselves at first Sight to be nothing more than Dialects manifestly springing from the same common Root, which never did, nor ever will (as far as we may judge by the Practice of above two Thousand Years successively) conjugate Verbs, decline Nouns, or compare Adjectives like the *Hebrew* or the *Arabic*. These Languages will always compound Verbs and Nouns with Prepositions, which essentially alter the Sense: These Languages never had any possessive Pronouns affixed to their Nouns,

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to determine the Person or Persons to whom they do of Right belong: They prefix no single Letters to their Words which may be equivalent to Conjunctions, thereby to connect the Sense of what goes before, with what follows. Any Man that is but tolerably initiated in any one of the *Eastern Tongues*, and that compares it with any of ours, must own that what I say is so far right. And I shall readily own, that, were it not for these distinguishing Marks by which original Languages may be distinguished from one another, I should have concurred with *Stiernhielm* in affirming, that all Tongues seem to arise from one Language at first, to which they may be all reducedⁱ.

But then again, when I reflect, that by the lowest Computation the Earth was MDCCLVII Years old, when this Confusion happened; and that by that Account it is not six Thousand Years old now; that, if we take the highest Account, the Matter is not much mended; that we know what the *Hebrew Tongue* was above three Thousand Years ago when *Moses* wrote; that he gives a Specimen of some *Chaldaean* Words used in *Jacob's* Time, which correspond to what else we have of that Language at this Day; and of some *Egyptian* Words, which are different from *Hebrew*; that the Time when those two Languages were formed

ⁱ Videri omnes Linguas, quae in orbe cognito existerunt, & hodie exstant, ex una ortas, & ad unam posse reduci. *Id. ibid.*

was above two Hundred Years earlier than the Time when *Moses* wrote ^k; when again I reflect that the *Arabic* Language from *Mahomet's* Time to this Day corresponds with itself in that operose and philosophical Way of forming its Verbs, which was then in Use, and that too with so few Anomalies that the Masters say its Grammar, is one of the simplest in the World: When, I say, I put all those Things, and many more of the same Sort together, I cannot conceive that the common Changes which occur in the Dialects with which we are acquainted, are in any Measure sufficient to account for this Matter^l.

^k Had the *Ægyptian* and the *Canaanitish* Language been the same, *Joseph* needed not to have spoken with his Brethren by an Interpreter; nor would they have talked so freely before him as they did, but because they firmly believed that he could not understand them, since the *Ægyptian* Tongue was so different from their own. *Gen.* xlii. 23.

^l *Lingua Arabica est omnium quotquot exstant longe copiosissima; infinita fere sunt ejus Vocabula, quae quoque multiplices obtinent significationes: Tredecim habet conjugationes quae diversam plerumque significationem habent: Ejus Anomaliae sunt paucissimae; nam in Grammatica Arabica plurimi Canones occurrunt, quibus nulla est exceptio. Idcirco licet a nonnullis propter immensam verborum copiam omnium Linguarum habeatur difficillima, nihilominus quod Grammaticas Regulas attinget, omnium (excepta forsan Persica) facillima est & simplicissima. Ockleii Introduct. ad Lingg. Orient. pag. 129, 130.*

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For I must beseech you, Sir, to take this along with you, that Dialects will much sooner alter now, than they would, or indeed than they could, naturally speaking, in that infant State of Mankind have done. The World was then thin, and the Dispersion would make it thinner, by scattering the People that were collected then into one Body very far asunder; so that for want of Commerce, which it was the Work of Ages to settle, and the mutual Assistance which that gives, Men would be obliged to converse each one with his own Colony; and consequently by not bringing in foreign Customs, they would keep their Dialects far more entire than they do now, or are ever like to do hereafter in a peopled World. And for the same Reason, they would for some few Ages at least, be free from Foreign Conquests of People that spoke different Tongues, and, considering the Time that is elapsed since the Confusion at *Babel*, those few Ages will go a great Way in the Reckoning.

I have already observed that the *Chaldean* was a Language already formed in *Laban's* Time, and the *Egyptian* in *Joseph's*. Small and insensible Alterations, which perhaps will not be discernible in an Age or two, will undoubtedly happen; but then believe me, Sir, they will be very small and insensible, unless a People converse much with Strangers. It is Commerce, and Conquest, and Colonies planted in Regions already peopled with Nations that

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speak

speak distinct Languages, which bring in the
 Floods of new Words, and that produce the
 great and flagrant Changes. But Nations sel-
 dom trade much Abroad, or make Invasions
 upon their Neighbours, or send forth Plan-
 tations or Colonies into remote Countries, till
 they are pretty well stocked at Home. And
 this, as I have said more than once, must have
 been the Effect of several Ages after the Dis-
 persion.

I desire, Sir, that you would now go along
 with me in the History of some Languages
 with which we are both acquainted. The *Ro-
 man* Language was formed, and very beautiful
 before *Plautus's* Time; and though now and
 then some Archaisms appear in his Writings,
 yet any Man that understands *Latin* may read
 the Books written in it, whilst it was still a
 living Tongue, from *Plautus* down to *Theodo-
 ric the Goth*, in whose Time *Sidonius* lived,
 which was near seven Hundred Years. And
 had not the barbarous Nations broke into
Italy, it would have continued to be an in-
 telligible Language for several Ages more.
 But then the *Goths*, and after them the *Lom-
 bards* fixed their Settlements in *Italy*: The
Franks and *Burgundians* in *France*: the *Van-
 dals*, *Goths*, and *Moors* in *Spain*: These new
 Settlements by Degrees introduced new
 Tongues; which however by their Affinity, at
 first Sight visible, discover the Original from
 which they spring. Had not the *Normans*
 come

come in with *William* the Conqueror, and successively afterwards as long as our Kings were Dukes of *Normandy*, the old *Saxon* and its Dialects would not have been so soon lost: And yet now that its Grammar is thoroughly known, and we have excellent Dictionaries of this Language, it may be very well understood in a few Months with tolerable Industry; and we have Treatises extant in that Language near a Thousand Years old. The *Islanders*, who speak the Language of the ancient *Danes*, (who when they over-run this Island seven or eight Hundred Years ago, left great Marks of their Tongue behind them) have suffered very inconsiderable Alterations in their Dialect, as we know by the numerous Monuments still extant in it, which are above five Hundred Years old, which Constancy in their Language is certainly owing to the very little Conversation which they have with the rest of Mankind.

Look now, Sir, into the *Greek*, and tell me whether it is not in the main the self same Tongue, as to it's Grammar (for I regard not the obsolete Words that are antiquated, or the new ones that have been taken in) as it appears in *Homer's* Poems, and in the Commentaries of *Eustathius*, though *Homer* and *Eustathius*, lived full two Thousand Years asunder. Indeed when the *Turks* over-run *Greece*, Darkness quickly ensued, and *Greek* soon became what we now see it. But still what a wide

Difference is there, betwixt *Greek*, either ancient or modern, and the *Eastern Languages*? And as notorious as the Changes are, no Man that understands Etymology can think that one was made out of the other.

In a Word, Sir, considering the Time that has elapsed since the Building of the Tower of *Babel*; and considering what Progress and Alterations some of the Languages which we know have made in three Thousand Years, others in two Thousand and two Thousand five Hundred Years, and others in a Thousand; and considering that there are some Tongues, in which, when compared with others, you will find *nec volam nec vestigium*; the the Variety now actually existing of Idioms spoken by the several Inhabitants of this our Earth, can I think be no Way possibly accounted for, without supposing such a miraculous Formation of Languages as we find recorded in the xith Chapter of *Genesis*; let any Man look here in *Europe* into the *Finnish* Tongue, and its Dialects, the *Estbish*, and the *Lettish*; let him examine the *Hungarian*, which is a Language entirely different from any other spoken in *Europe*; let him cast his Eyes upon the many Dialects of the *Slavonian*, of which we have several curious Specimens in your admirable Collection, and even here we shall see the Proposition which I advance fully made out. But if we go farther *East* into *China*, and the *East Indies*, or farther *West* into *America*,

rica, the Diversity is still more astonishing. But then if we recur to *Moses*, this Astonishment ceases ; he solves this *Phaenomenon* easily : And without such a Solution, it would, I fear, have given too great a Handle to the *Free-Thinkers* of this Age, to have thrown aside the *Mosaic* History, and to have given Credit to the most fabulous Accounts of other Nations, which boast of the greatest Antiquity ; if they would have allowed those Accounts to have been sufficient.

You see, Sir, what Use I would make of all this. The History of Empires, of Trade, of the Progress of Arts and Sciences do prove demonstrably to an unprejudiced Man, that the World is not likely to be older than the *Mosaic* Account. If the History of Language which *Moses* gives us be considered likewise upon this Plan, we shall see nothing to contradict it. That divine Historian tells us when it was that Mankind had but one Language, and how new ones were introduced, and what a Dispersion this caused. And nothing but such a Collection as yours, made with so much Exactness, and which by the Care of our admirable Friend Mr. *Reland* of *Utrecht*, is like to be printed with so much Accuracy (in which, though that is the principal Thing, all the other Collections that I have seen have been notoriously deficient) could have set this Matter in such a Light, as in my Opinion it deserved.

This,

This, Sir, I thought fit to say concerning your Work: Some other Questions may probably be asked upon this Occasion, concerning which, when I have given you my Thoughts, and answered some Objections which have been made by a most learned Friend of ours, I shall close this Discourse, which will, I fear, appear tedious to many Readers, and useless perhaps to some.

Some will ask here which Languages I take to be Original, and whence derived; or in other Words, which are co-eval with the *Babylonish* Confusion, and which have by Degrees crept in since. Now in Answer to this Question, I must acknowledge that it is not easy, and perhaps in many Cases impossible, to give a determinate Answer to it. But as according to my Notion the Dispersion of the Builders quickly followed upon the Confusion of Tongues,; and as the Descendents of *Noah* went according to their Families into Regions contiguous to one another, (as the incomparable *Bochart* has shewn at large in his *Phaleg*) so it is agreeable to Reason as well as Fact, that those Colonies or Tribes which lay nearest to one another, and consequently were most likely to have mutual Commerce and Intercourse with each other, should have Languages the nearest akin given them at first. To form Dialects is a Work of Ages, even now when Trade, and Business, and War have introduced greater Correspondences. And we see there were distinct
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Languages formed in the Regions near *Pa-læstine*, much sooner than we can imagine to have been, had they gradually arisen from the same common Stock. When *Jacob* and *Laban* made a Covenant together, *Genesis* xxxi. 47. they erected a Heap of Stones on which they eat; and *Laban* called it *Jegar Sabadutha*, and *Jacob* *Gal-Ed*; which Words signify one in *Chaldee*, the other in *Hebrew*, a Heap of Witness. *Laban's* are genuine *Chaldee* Words, as *Jacob's* are *Hebrew*. *Pharaoh* called *Joseph* *Tsophnath-Paaneabb*, i. e. a Revealer of hidden Things, which Words are not *Hebrew*, though *Tsophnath* has an Affinity with the *Hebrew* Root *Haphan*, which signifies to *hide*. Here then we see three distinct Dialects formed in *Jacob's* Time. The *Hebrew* seems to have been the Language of *Canaan*, when *Abraham* who was by Birth a *Chaldean*, came thither^m.

The particular Texture of the *Arabic*, which is much more operose, and yet more regular than the *Hebrew*, leads me to think that it is as old as the *Hebrew*. Before *Mahomet's* Time, who was a Native of *Arabia*, the Inhabitants of that noble Countrey seem to have been very little known to, or knowing of the Inhabitants of the rest of the World. They had then no Learning among them, nor

^m See Mr. *Le Clerc's* first Dissertation before his Commentary upon *Genesis*.

long afterwards till the Time of *Almamoun*, who was the 28th *Chaliph* of the *Saracens*, and the 7th of the Race of *Abassidae*. Their Language was then the same that it is now, and the *Alcoran* is looked upon as the Standard of the Tongue, and allowed to be so by the best Judges among the *Europeans*, who cannot be supposed to be led by any superstitious Motive to pass such a Judgment. They never were conquered by any Foreign Nation, and tho' some of those who lived the nearest to *Ægypt* and *Syria* drove a Trade in Caravans in *Jacob's* Time, *Gen.* xxxvii. 25. as they do to this Day, yet Strangers seem to have known very little of the Heart of their Countrey. Excepting the Inroads which *Sesostris* made among them, before his great Expedition into *Asia*, when he led his victorious Army up as high as the *Euxine* Sea, we read of no Foreign Enemy that ever made any great Impression upon their Countrey. Neither the *Persians*, nor the *Macedonians*, nor the *Romans*, could ever conquer them. They lived in Tribes like the *Jews*, deriving themselves from *Ishmael* and *Joktan*; and Nations that live after that Manner, if they are not overrun by a Foreign Force, keep themselves more unmix'd, and their Language consequently is far less subject to Alteration, than that of other People who converse more promiscuously with Strangers. The *Æthiopians* seem by their Language, which agrees very much with the *Arabic*,

bic, to have been a Colony of the *Arabians*, rather than of the *Ægyptians*ⁿ.

From all these Things put together, I am apt to conclude, that 'tis hard to judge which of these three Languages, the *Hebrew*, the *Chaldee*, or the *Arabic*, was the oldest. Their mutual Agreement in the Fundamentals which I have before described, is no Argument to me that any one them is derived from the rest, if we consider their great Antiquity. The *Syriac* indeed comes from the *Chaldee*, and was formed upon the Plan of that Language after the the *Babylonish* Captivity. It is natural to suppose (as I hinted before) that when God confounded the Speech of the Builders at *Babel*, he made the Dialects of those People who were to live near one another so far to agree, that they might with less Difficulty, and in a shorter Space of Time, mutually understand each other, and so the more easily maintain an Intercourse together, which it was necessary for them to do.

The Children of *Japhet* were sent farther off, to the North and to the West, and for the same Reason several Dialects among them too, agreed in some common Principles, as the *Eastern* ones also did. *Junius* who published

ⁿ Debet qui Linguae *Æthiopicae* operam dare instituit, *Arabicae* peritum esse, tanta enim est inter has cognatio, ut quot *Arabicas* voces didiceris, tot fere *Æthiopicas* disces. *Ockleii Introd. ad Lingg. Orient.* pag. 160.

the Fragments of the four Gospels out of a very ancient Copy which he found in *Germany*, in a Language which is manifestly a Dialect of the *Teutonic*, observes and proves by Abundance of Instances in his *Glossary* upon that Book, that the *Greek* and *Gothic* (as he calls it, supposing it to have been the Translation made by *Ulfilas*) were but different Dialects which seem to have sprung from the same common Root. This Language spread it self throughout *Germany* and *Scandinavia*, and got at last into *England* and the *Netherlands*. That the *Latin* owes its Original in a great Measure to the *Greek*, is, I believe, allowed by most learned Men that have considered of the Matter. But now whether all these Colonies of the *Japhetic* Line, who were dispersed into these Regions, had at first but one Language; or whether there were at first several Kindred-Branches, (as I suppose to have been in those Countries that bordered upon the Land of *Canaan*) which though different in very many Things, yet had some common Fundamentals to testify their Relation, it is impossible at this Distance, for want of knowing the History of those People, to determine. But the *Finnish*, the *Slavonian*, and the *Hungarian* seem to be original Tongues, and to have no real Affinity with the *Teutonic*, or the *Greek*. Whether the *Cantabrig*, and the ancient *Gaulish*, (of which the *British*, the *Irish*, the *Aremoric*, and the *Manks* are but Dialects) be not so likewise I will

will not decide. Still there is *Persia*, *China*, the *East-Indies*, the Midland Parts of *Afric*, and all *America* behind. It is enough to my Purpose that I have proved there were some distinct Languages, at least two, I think many more formed at *Babel*; whereas *Moses* says expressly there was but one before. The Miracle is equally great and visible in making one Language at once, as one Hundred. This is all I contend for, and what I think conducive to Religion to grant.

For I must own that I have often with Concern observed that some Interpreters, otherwise very learned Men and very useful Commentators, have shewn a great Aversion to allow any Thing to be miraculous in the History of the Old Testament, where they could possibly avoid it without abandoning their Religion. Prophecies require a supernatural Knowledge, as well as Miracles do a supernatural Power; and therefore we have seen some of the Prophecies in the Old Testament, which relate to the Messiah, industriously and artificially eluded, when they have been applied out of the Old Testament, to the Circumstances of our Redemption in the New. This, in my Opinion, is a Matter of pernicious Consequence to Religion, tho' I dare not arraign those Interpreters who have done it of Irreligion, especially since they have so solemnly acquitted themselves of that Imputation.

But if we consider that the Oeconomy of our Redemption as set forth in the New Testament, was prefigured and foretold by Types, by Miracles, and by Prophecies in the Old; it gives us a quite different Idea of the Power and Mercy of God to Mankind, as exhibited by *Jesus Christ*, when he sees him exerting his Power in the Flood, in the Destruction of *Sodom*, in the turning of *Lot's Wife* into a Pillar of Salt, in the Plagues of *Ægypt*, in the leading of the *Israelites* through the *Red-Sea*, in the Preservation of them by a Course of Miracles for forty Years together in the Wilderness, in the wonderful Overthrow of the Walls of *Jericho*, in the preternatural Lengthening of the Day when *Joshua* fought with the *Canaanites*, in the astonishing Strength of *Samson*, in the constant prophetic Virtue that resided in the *Urim* and *Thummim* during the *Theocracy*, in the Miracles that were wrought by *Elijah*, and *Elisha*, in the Preservation of the three Children in the Fiery Furnace, and of *Daniel* in the Lion's Den, and in very many other wonderful Transactions recorded in the Old Testament, than if we could reduce all these to the common Force and Energy of natural Causes. And though we ought not to multiply Miracles, where Things can be solved without them; yet on the other Hand where the Letter of the Text implies something miraculous to have been done, I think those Interpreters wonderfully to blame that stretch the Text,

and

and use all the Arts with it they possibly can, rather than confess frankly, as the *Ægyptian* Magicians did upon another Occasion, that this was *the Finger of God*. The History that we now examine, plainly supposes that new Languages were then made; how they were made it says not, nor was it needful; especially to us who know not how any one of the Operations of God came originally out of the Creator's Hand. I have endeavoured to demonstrate *a priori* that this Miracle must, upon Supposition that the *Mosaic* History is true, which both Christians and *Jews* do all firmly believe it to be, have been wrought by God himself, (whose own Act it is represented to be) within a few Ages after the Flood. Your noble Collection of Lord's Prayers, which you did me the Honour to communicate to me several Years ago, led me first to these Meditations, and by them a Man wholly unacquainted with any Language but his own, if he can but distinguish a Noun from a Pronoun, a Substantive from an Adjective, and a Verb from an Adverb, may be able to judge of the Weakness or Strength of my Arguments.

I do indeed willingly allow that it was equally *the Finger of God*, whether the Minds or the Tongues of the Workmen were confounded. But then in that Case the Miracle does not so plainly and flagrantly appear, nor would it have had so thorough an Effect upon the Builders themselves, as according to my
Sup-

Supposition it would certainly have ; because Men may quarrel and break off Society without a Miracle, whereas they cannot speak with new Tongues by their own natural Strength. And Nothing contributed so much to the wonderful Effect which S. Peter's first Sermon, after the Resurrection at the great Pentecost, (*Acts ii.*) had upon the Minds of so many Thousands of his Auditors, as that People, then assembled from so many distant Regions, hearing the Apostles *speak in their Tongues the wonderful Works of God.* The more Miracles therefore are incontestably proved to have been once wrought, the more Evidences we have of the Power of God, whom we not only *believe to be*, but also to be able *to reward those that diligently seek him.* But I must go on.

Some have upon this Occasion been very inquisitive to know wherein the Crime of these Builders consisted, and what Design we may reasonably suppose God to have had in inflicting this particular Punishment upon these Men. What the Text says is only this: *The LORD said, Behold the People is one, and they have all ONE LANGUAGE; and this they begin to do; and now Nothing will be restrained from them, that they have imagined to do. Go to, let go down, and there CONFOUND their LANGUAGE, that they may not UNDERSTAND one another's SPEECH.* Gen. xi. 6, 7. It is plain by this that their Pride and Vanity was chiefly displeasing to

God

God °. But give me Leave to add another Reason. God had promised *Noah*, and confirmed that Promise by a Sign from Heaven, that a Flood of Waters should no more destroy the Earth. That therefore they were not afraid of. But then, seeing that Race of Mankind was to last till the general Day of Judgment, it was for the Interest of Mankind, and of Religion, in the State the World was then

° *Josephus* assigns another Crime. He says that God commanded the Children of *Noah*, after they had ventured to go down into the Plains out of the Hill-Country where the Ark rested at first, to divide themselves into several Colonies and so people the World; that so they might be kept from quarrelling among themselves, and have more Ground to cultivate; and consequently have greater Plenty. He fancies that this Command of God's was in their Opinion insidious, and that they fondly imagined that God could more easily destroy them if they were dispersed, than if they kept all together. And that accordingly at the Instigation of *Nimrod* they attempted to erect such a Tower as should be higher than any Waters could reach. *Jos. Antiqq. Jud. i. 5.* This Account had it been given by a less Writer than *Josephus*, would be judged impertinent. God had actually promised never to drown the World again. He had confirmed that Promise by producing a Rainbow in the Sky (*Gen. ix. 8,—17.*) which Meteor either they had never seen before, or else it appeared when there were no Clouds in the Air that could possibly cause it. That Fear therefore could not possess them, nor is it assigned or so much as hinted at by *Moses*, when he relates this whole Transaction. They were unwilling to disperse themselves till they had done something which might perpetuate their Name to future Ages. This is all we know of that Matter.

in, that its Inhabitants who then began to be very numerous, and who were no longer afraid of a Flood, should be in such a Manner dispersed, that some Nations might not for a long Time have any possible Intercourse with others. By that Means, if one Nation was wicked, another might escape the Contagion, and might punish them for their Wickedness; and besides, they could not when they were thus parted, corrupt one another so easily as they did before. For there is great Reason to think that the Antediluvians had more Commerce with one another, than has been ever among Mankind, since this Accident divided the Descendents of *Noah* from one another. The Posterity of *Japhet* were then parted at one Stroke from the Children of *Shem*, and forced to seek new Habitations wheresoever they could find them, and they again were separated and subdivided from one another. This would naturally lead them to reflect seriously upon what God had newly done. And this Effect seems to have followed in Fact from the Dispersion. The Worship of the true God was far from being extinct in *Abraham's* Time in the Land of *Canaan*, where *Melchizedec* was the King of *Salem*, and *Abimelech* King of *Gerar* ^p. Nor do I see any sufficient Cause to suppose that it was extinct in *Chaldæa*, or that *Abraham* was an Idolater; though Idolatry began then to creep

^p See *Gen.* xiv. 18. and *Gen.* xx. 4.

into that Countrey, (*Josh. xxiv. 2.*) when God called him to leave *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, and go into *Palestine*. *Laban* who lived in *Mesopotamia* long after was certainly no Idolater, nor the *Arabians* who lived in the Neighbourhood of *Job*. It is very probable that *Ishmael's* Family would preserve at least, if not propagate the Worship of the true God in those Parts of *Arabia* where they settled. He was not unknown to *Balak* and *Balaam*, who lived several Ages after, though they did not worship him as they ought. And, if what Doctor *Hyde* says be true⁹, (and he was admirably versed in all the Learning of the East, even of its remotest Regions) the ancient *Persians* worshipped the God of Heaven and Earth, though with a great Mixture of Superstition, and never were Idolaters, as neither are the small Remainers of them, who are preserved to this Day. That *Japhet's* Offspring who were spread, according to *Noah's* Prophecy, to the North and the West did so too for several Ages I do not Question, though the History of the *European* Nations is very lame for a long while after the Dispersion. This therefore was a great and a wise Reason, why a good and a merciful God should oblige Men to separate, who would otherwise much sooner have compleated the Measure of their Iniquity, had they kept together, which, had there been but one Language,

⁹ In *Historia Religionis veterum Persarum*.

they might have been tempted to do. By this Attempt of theirs they shew'd their Vanity and their Pride: The Dispersion effectually humbled them. That, though a Judgment, and a great one too, seems therefore to have been inflicted in Mercy, for the Ends already mentioned, and also to keep up the Fear and Worship of God longer among them, when they were thus parted, than it would have been, had they been still suffered to live together.

But here I expect to be told that the Time between the Flood and the Birth of *Phaleg* was much too short to raise such a Number of People, as would, when parted, have been subdivided into Colonies, both numerous and populous enough for such a Purpose: For if there had not been sufficient Numbers out of that Company to form themselves into Colonies, that could understand one another, they could not have afforded nor received such a mutual Assistance, as was absolutely necessary for Men who were to look out for new Habitations in a savage and an unpeopled World. And a hundred Years, which is all the Time that the *Hebrew* Account allows, even notwithstanding the Promise that was made to *Noah*, and his Seed after the Flood, that they should increase and multiply, (*Gen. xix. 7.*) can hardly be supposed to have been sufficient. *Isaac Vossius*, a Writer above any Character that I can give him, says positively, that unless we should suppose that Men sprouted like Gourds,

Gourds, and could beget Children at twelve Years of Age or sooner, the common Computation which we follow in our Bibles would not be sufficient ^r.

You, Sir, will, I know, not be shocked at this Proposition. But since others may, who know nothing but what they read in our *English* Bibles, and since the Thing it self is of Moment, I shall beg Leave to set it in a clear Light.

Now the Case is this. We have three Copies of the *Pentateuch* extant, which are all older than *Christ*. Two written in *Hebrew*, and one Translation from the *Hebrew*. Those that are written in *Hebrew*, are the *Hebrew* Copy commonly so called, and the *Samaritan*, which differs from the other only in this, that it is written in the *Samaritan* Character, which

^r Jam vero quis credat Turris Babylonicae constructionem, confusionem Linguarum, ac dispersionem Gentium factam esse vix uno post Diluvium elapso saeculo? Ex sacris Literis manifeste hoc Tempus colligitur, inde enim nomen inditum Phalego. Atqui tum forsitan necdum tertius Noacho natus erat Heres. Huic difficultati ut nonnulli occurrerent, miram commenti sunt methodum, ad multiplicandum brevi spatio genus humanum: Primos namque post Diluvium Patriarchas tam foecundos fuisse dicunt, ut Anno Aetatis duodecimo, vel etiam prius, liberis gignendis operam dederint. Sed sane etiamsi concedatur eos cucurbitarum instar pullulasse, non tamen efficient, ut haec computandi ratio non sit prorsus ridicula. *Is. Vossii Dissert. de Aetate Mundi*, p. 257. See also his *Answer to Schotanus*, p. 420, 421.

is the Character that the *Jews* used when they lived in their Countrey, before they were carried into *Babylonia* by *Nebuchadnezzar*. After the *Jews* returned under *Ezra*, they had no Communication with the *Samaritans*, who had their Copies of that Law from those *Jews* who taught them at first, when they were planted in the Regions of *Samaria* by *Salmanassar*. This is plain from the New Testament. (*John* iv. 9.) Consequently then, since their Copy differs from the *Jewish* no otherwise than what common Varieties of Readings will account for, we have an additional Strength added to those Readings, in which theirs and the *Hebrew* Copy agree. The *Greek* Copy, which was translated by *LXX Jewish* Interpreters in the Time of *Ptolemee Philadelphus*, is above two hundred Years older than *Christ*. And the *Hebrew* Copy which we now commonly use, is that which was preserved by the *Jews* after the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the Dispersion of that Nation by *Titus*. This Copy was not only not taken from the *LXX*, but the Authority of that venerable *Greek* Translation (which till *Titus's* Time was received by the *Jews*, and quoted by them upon all Occasions, as we still see in the Writings of *Philo Judaeus* and *Josephus*) has been opposed by the *Rabbins* ever since, who adhere very superstitiously to the Letter of their *Hebrew* Copy. We may be sure then, that in every Text where all the three Copies agree, we have the true Reading,

Reading, since it is confirmed by three different Copies which are all supported by different Bodies of Men, who adhere each to their own Copy in Contradistinction to the other two. The *Jews* absolutely reject the Copy of the *Samaritans*, whom they look upon as *Cuthim*, i. e. Descendents of *Cush*, and *Minim*, i. e. *Heretics*. Nor will the *Samaritans* receive theirs. The ancient Christians every where till St. *Hierom's* Time, and the *Greek Church* to this Day quote the Version of the *LXX* as the authentic Text, as did also the Apostles and Writers of the New Testament. If then where all three Copies agree, we are sure of three Witnesses to the reading of any Text; where two agree, there is a Probability of two Witnesses (where all have an equal Claim to Credibility) against one.

Now both the *Samaritan* Copy, and the Translation of the *LXX* Interpreters join in lengthening the Lives of the Patriarchs after the Flood several Hundreds of Years more, than what the *Jewish* Copy (from which our Bibles are translated) allows them. So that, whereas according to the *Hebrew* there are but a Hundred and one Years between the Flood and the Birth of *Phaleg*; according to the *LXX* there are five Hundred and thirty one Years. The *Samaritan* Copy expunges the second *Cainan*, and cuts off five Years from *Arphaxad's* Age, before he begat Children. That takes off a Hundred thirty five Years. So that
by

by that Account there were but three Hundred ninety six Years between the Flood and *Phaleg's* Birth. In the other Numbers the *Samaritan* and the *LXX's* Copies agree. *St. Luke* owns the second *Cainan* (*Luke* iii. 36.) which shews that the Computation of the *LXX* was by the *Jews* at that Time thought to be just. We see then that we have the Accounts of the *Samaritans* and of the *Jews* in *Ptolemee's* Time very nearly agreeing; and both vastly different from that in our *Hebrew* Bibles. I chuse to adhere to the Computation of the *LXX*, because it has the Authority of *St. Luke* to back it. Accordingly therefore instead of one hundred and one Years, which are all that can be allowed by the *Hebrew* Calculation for the peopling of the World from the Flood to the Dispersion at *Babel*, we have five hundred and thirty one Years which are amply sufficient for such a Purpose. The Descendents of *Japhet* might very easily be, and doubtless were numerous enough at that Time to separate themselves to the North and West, and those of *Shem* to supply that vast Tract of Land which comprehends *Persia*, *Chaldæa*, *Assyria*, *Arabia*, and perhaps still farther East. The *Chamites* might retire into *Palestine* and *Afric*. This will solve all Difficulties easily; and since *Moses* is the only Writer that certainly fixes the Time of this Dispersion, and shews which Way every Branch of the *Noachidae* went, and where they settled; and since we see in Fact that

that there are, and have been for three Thousand Years past several Languages, which entirely differ in their Frame and Make from one another, and yet still preserve the original Distinctions in the main Points entire, through all the various Channels into which they have been derived, we have Reason to thank God that this Relation is preserved. For now we are able to obviate an Objection which might otherwise have been speciously brought against the Newness of the World, as it is delivered down by *Moses*, even allowing the oldest Accounts which the *Samaritan* and *Greek* Copies exhibit to us.

I should now conclude this long Discourse, but that I ought to take Notice of some Objections which our excellent Friend Mr. *Reland* did me the Honour to send me, when I sent him a Sketch of my Thoughts some Years ago, upon this Subject. His Notion is much the same with *Stiernhielm*'s, that there were no Tongues formed in *Babel*; but that either they have all been derived by gradual and imperceptible Alterations from the *Hebrew*, which he takes for granted was the Language of *Noah*, or were formed at once by mutual Agreement. And that if we consider what an entire Separation of all Inter-course; a Disability in some Nations of pronouncing four or five Letters, which are Familiar to other People, by Reason of the different Disposition of the Organs of their
Speech;

Speech; what different Customs and different Diet will produce, this is not so much to be wondered at. His Arguments have indeed this Weight with me, that I think it is detestably unjust to suspect, much less to arraign any Man of Impiety, or of favouring of the *Prae-Adamites*, or of those who hold the Eternity of the World, that does not upon this Question think as I do. He and *Stiernbielmius* are both proper Judges; one thoroughly skilled in the Languages of the *North*; the other equally versed in the Idioms of the *East*. Yet since neither of them have taken Notice of that upon which in my Judgment the Hinge of the Question turns, I cannot yet recede from my own Opinion, though I must own if I find that Mr. *Reland* does not acquiesce, I shall be tempted to fear that I am in the Wrong.

I. His first Objection is taken from the Affinity which the *European* Tongues have with the *Hebrew*; which he thinks to be so great, that (upon a Supposition of the *Hebrew's* being the oldest Language) they must certainly have taken their Original from it, and not have been miraculously formed. Allowing for the Time, the Difference is not greater between them, than what we find between *Latin*, and the great Dialects *French* and *Italian* and *Spanish*, which have sprung from it within these one Thousand two Hundred Years.

Now

Now here, Sir, you see that I have prevented a good deal of this already. My Argument does not depend upon the Difference of Words, but upon the Difference of Grammar between any two Languages; from whence it proceeds, that when any Words are derived from one Language into another, the derived Words are there turned and changed according to the particular Genius of the Language into which they are transplanted. I have shewed, for Instance, in what Fundamentals the *Islandish* and the *Greek* agree. I can easily afterwards suppose that they might be both derived from one common Mother, which is and perhaps has for many Ages been entirely lost. Still we see the same common Marks in both, which I have at large explained. Whereas when an *Arabic* or *Hebrew* Word is once brought into any of our *Western* Tongues, in that Case there are not only Letters changed, or taken away, or added; but the transplanted Words are inflected, if they are Nouns or Verbs, in such a Manner as may best answer to the Grammar of the Language into which they are adopted, which is fundamentally different from the Grammar of that Tongue from whence they were taken. The late excellent Mr. *Lbuid* (who published his *Archæologia Britannica*, as a Prologue to a much greater Work, which God did not spare him Life to finish) begins his Work with a Discourse which he calls *Comparative Etymology*; in that

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the Grounds and Rules of that Science, with numerous Applications to them all, are clearly and methodically laid down. And when he comes to give Instances out of *Cornish, Welsh, Irish* or *Aremorican* (which are all Dialects of the ancient *Celtic*) of Words that are demonstrably derived from the *Latin*, it is surprizing to see how much they are altered, and how odly they are derived from that Language. The

— *facies non omnibus una,
Nec diversa tamen, qualem decet esse sororum,*

when applied many Times to the same Words, as they appear in the different Dialects, is by no Means verified in the Case before us. Would any Man that is a Stranger to Inquiries of this Nature, imagine that *Esbog*, which is *Irish* for a *Bishop*, should come from *Episcopus Cinges* * (in the same Language *Whitsontide*) from *Pentecoste*; *Giorno* in *Italian*, from *Diurnum*; and *Carême, Lent*, in *French*, from *Quadragesima*; *Didaco, James*, in *Spanish*, from *Jacobus*; *Hefis, a Shirt*, in *Welsh*, from *Camisia*; or *Povo, People*, in *Portuguese*, from *Populus*? *Q. Christina* said once pleasantly of Mr. *Menage* (who was one of the greatest Masters in this Science that ever wrote) that he knew not only whence every Word came, but whither it would go †. Carry, says Mr. *Reland*,

* C before I in *Irish*, is pronounced like K.

† Mr. *Menage* in his *Origines Françaises*, voce *Haquenée*, derives *Alfana*, which signifies a *Horse* in *Spanish*, from

the Word **CHRISTO** into *Cbina*, and it is turn-
ed in a Moment into **KI-LI-SU-TO**; and the
like Change will be in all other Words. So
that in an Instant you will not know those
very Words which you had but just before
pronounced.

All this I readily allow; yet I cannot think
it comes up to the Question. Not one *Euro-
pean* Language that is derived from a *Greek* or
Teutonic Stock, declines its Verbs any otherwise
than according to an active or a passive Form:
Not one of them affixes possessive Pronouns to
the Nouns, to which they belong, they all raise
the Signification of their Adjectives by three De-
grees of Comparison, marked by different Ter-
minations. And all of them compound their
Verbs with Prepositions which change their Sig-
nification; which runs thro' every Mood and

Equus; upon which he produces a whimsical Epigram
made upon himself.

*ALFANA vient d' Equus sans doute.
Mais il faut avoïer aussi,
Qu'en venant de la jusqu' icy,
Il a bien changé sur la Route.*

The Author of this Epigram had Reason to say, that
Equus was pretty much changed, before he was turned
into *Alfana*. But in truth *Alfana* comes from *Elefanto*;
and is so rendered in some *Spanish* Dictionaries. The
Spaniards had heard the *Moors* talk much of Elephants, as
the principal of all Beasts of Carriage, and for Usefulness
in War. That led them who had seen no *Elephants*, to
call *Horses* by the same Name a little altered; *Horses* be-
ing the most useful Creatures in War, that are known in
Europe.

Tense thro' which they can be vary'd ; by which Means these Verbs thus compounded become many Times widely different from the original Verbs from which they spring. In every of these Particulars we find an essential Difference in these Languages from those *Eastern* ones, which are related to the *Hebrew*.

And there is no doubt but many other grammatical Observations may be made, by which the different Construction of these *European* and those *Asiatic* Languages would appear yet more plainly, if these should not be thought sufficient.

I do not therefore think that the Affinity between many *European* Tongues and the *Hebrew*, upon which our Friend lays so great a Stress, even though it were much greater than it is, proves what he designs it should. It may be very easily accounted for by those that know that the *Phenicians* carry'd on all the Trade of the *Mediterranean* for many Ages : That *Carthage* was a Colony of *Tyre* : That that *African* Commonwealth by Degrees erected a mighty Empire, not only in *Africa* where they were Masters of the greatest Part of the Coast of *Barbary* ; but also in *Sicily*, in *Spain* (which was once almost all their own) and in *Sardinia* : That the *Phenicians* planted great and numerous Colonies in the Islands of the *Egean* Sea, in *Cilicia*, in *Spain*, and *Gaul* ; that they traded into *Britain* ; that they went down the *Red Sea* into the

the *Ocean*, as far as the Island of *Taprobane* (or *Ofir*) now *Ceylon*: So that in Truth the Maritime Trade of the World was in their Hands; all which Things are proved beyond Contradiction by *Monf. Bochart* in his *Canaan*. For when these Things are laid together, we shall not wonder to see large Footsteps of the *Hebrew*, which was their Mother Tongue in all Places where they went, especially where they planted Colonies or made Conquests.

II. But then, says *Mr. Reland*, what Reason can be assigned by those that believe that this Creation of new Languages was a Judgment from God in order to oblige the Workmen to disperse, that those Colonies which spoke Languages that were nearly a-kin to one another, should not have been removed at the greatest Distances, and those whose Languages were entirely different placed next one another? The *Chineses* for the Purpose should have been planted near the *Chaldeans*, and their nearest Neighbours removed into *China*. This would have done the Work to Purpose; whereas now, when the Language of the neighbouring Nations was so near a-kin, they might be easily tempted to begin their Work again, from which they had been so lately scattered.

This Objection is I own a very ingenious one, and at first View seems very probable; though by the Principles already laid down, I think it may be easily answered. The Ends for which God caused that Dispersion were several.

several. It was his Design that the Earth should be universally peopled as soon as possible. But then nothing hinders but he might be equally willing that Nations descending from one common Stock, and of such there were three among the Children of *Noah*, should not be at once absolutely deprived of the Pleasure of living near one another, and of speaking Tongues so little differing, that one Colony might quickly learn anothers Dialect. The Association of these Builders, considering the Reason why they entred into it, was undoubtedly sinful; yet perhaps it might not be so sinful as to deserve so severe a Punishment as an entire Separation of every Tribe among them from their nearest Kindred, with whom they had hitherto spent all their Time. Mr. *Reland's* Scheme would have produced such a Separation. Whereas now by Reason of the Affinity of the Dialects, *Japhet's* Stock kept together: So did *Shem's*: So did *Cham's*: And the Languages of them all were I doubt not suited accordingly. There was no Danger that any of them should attempt to rebuild the Tower of *Babel*; and as for the City, that remained a Metropolis for *Nimrod* and his Family; *Japhet's* Family were entirely gone off, to seek new Seats. The rest, stunned with that sudden Stroke, would quickly go off to Regions at a lesser Distance, and there make Settlements. That once done, new Interests would soon arise, and then those that were so settled

settled would have very little Inclination to join in so successful, as well as so senseless a Design, as a second Trial to erect such a Tower, would certainly appear to be.

III. Mr. *Reland* farther objects, that it is not likely that the *Canaanites*, of the Posterity of *Cham*, who were the most instrumental in the Building of *Babel*, should be suffered to retain the primitive Language, when the Posterity of *Japhet*, who was particularly bless'd with the Promise that his Territories should be very wide, (*Gen. ix. 27.*) and of *Shem*, in whose Family God planted his Church, both lost it. And yet it is not doubted that *Hebrew*, or a Dialect differing from it but very little, was the Language of *Canaan* in *Abraham's* Time. *Melchizedek*, *Kiriath-Sepher*, *Abimelech*, *Phicol*, and many other Names and Words of the ancient *Canaanites* prove this beyond Contradiction.

To this I answer, 1. It is not certain that the *Hebrew* Language, as taken in Contradistinction to *Chaldee* and the other Kindred-Dialects, was the Tongue which these Builders spoke when they began to erect that Tower. The Language which *Abraham* spake when he came out of *Chaldaea*, was very probably his Mother Tongue. But how know we that that was *Hebrew*? *Laban* talked *Chaldee*, when *Jacob* talked *Hebrew*. (*Gen. xxxi. 47.*) It is probable then that *Abraham* did so too, whilst he lived in *Mesopotamia*. And no Arguments
that

that I have yet seen concerning this Matter prove in my Opinion any more than that a Dialect very nearly a-kin to the Biblical *Hebrew*, was the Language which was spoken till the Confusion.

2. The Notions which the *Jewish* Rabbins superstitiously espouse, of the peculiar Sanctity of the *Hebrew* Language, have no Foundation any where that I can find, either in Scripture or in good Sense. And though we should suppose there were such an outward Sanctity (for intrinsic it cannot be) in the *Hebrew* above other Tongues, yet we can hardly date that Sanctity higher than its being sanctify'd by God's writing the Ten Commandments upon two Tables of Stone in that Language. For if that Holiness be owing to its being the Language which God taught *Adam*, then it is wonderful that it was not better preserved. For we have none of it left, besides what is contained in the single Writings of the Old Testament. Nor do we know what Alterations it underwent from the Creation to the Confusion at *Babel*; and in a Thing of this Kind, any Alteration would derogate so much from its primogenial Sanctity. But farther, is it not yet far more wonderful that the Use of it should be suffered to be lost by the *Jews*, during the *Babylonish* Captivity? *Daniel* was instructed in the *Chaldean* Tongue, by the express Command of *Nebuchadnezzar*; (*Dan.* i. 4.) and in that Language he penned many of his

his Prophecies. At *Ezra's* Return the *Jews* spoke a Sort of broken *Chaldee*, which was degenerated in our blessed Saviour's Time into that Dialect which we now call *Syriac*. In that Language our Saviour and his Disciples discoursed to the People. But what is most wonderful of all is, that the Writers of the New Testament, who we are sure were divinely inspired, in their Writings and Discourses to those *Jews* that spoke *Greek*, used the Translation of the *LXX*, and even St. *Paul* among the rest, who from his Childhood was bred up to understand the original Language, as well as the ancient Traditions and Customs of his own Nation.

Besides, though the Dispersion was a Judgment upon those Builders who were thereby obliged of a sudden, and when they were unprepared, to seek new Habitations for themselves; yet the assigning this Language to one Company among them, and that Language to another, seems not to be any Part of that Curse. In Honour indeed to those earliest Descendents from *Noah*, who still preserved the Worship of God entire, he might so order it, that the Nations which were to plant nearest to those ancient Patriarchs should speak such Dialects as they might easily learn, and that was all. Farther, I think, cannot certainly be collected concerning this Matter.

IV. But Mr. *Reland* supposes that some Languages have been made by Agreement all at once. Thus he thinks that the *Chinese*, an

the Language of the *Yncas* of *Peru* were at first imposed upon those People, at the Command of the Sovereigns of those Countries, who might imagine, and not improbably, by this Means to keep their Subjects together, and to hinder them from mixing with other Nations. It is possible this might be so, and if it were, yet as I apprehend, it does not weaken my Argument. For unless we could suppose all those Languages which have none or very little Affinity with any other known Tongues, such as the *Finnish*, the *Hungarian*, the *Virginian*, and the like, were made at once by Agreement of the Nations that were to speak them, without such a gradual Alteration from some other Dialects, as we find in *English* for the Purpose from King *Ælfrid's* Time down to the present Age, it signifies Nothing. Besides, such an Imposition of new Languages upon a whole People at once, as *Mr. Reland* supposes, can only obtain in a Monarchy, where the Sovereign is entirely absolute, and where the People are disposed to pay a religious as well as an entire Obedience to all his Commands. That was the Case of the *Chinese*, and *Peruvians*, and more so perhaps, than of any other People in the World.

But was this the Case in *Phoenicia*, or *Canaan*, when *Abraham* lived there? Or in *Arabia* where the whole Nation lived in Tribes, without paying any Subjection to one Monarch *Mahomet's* Time? Were not the *Greeks* and

" some would obey *Nimrod* who then began
 " to affect an Empire over the rest, and some
 " would not, and so they parted". Does the
 Text seem to imply no more than this? Will
 it not bear, nay does it not literally require
 the Interpretation which I give, and not I a-
 lone, but the Generality of Commentators, both
Jews and *Christians*? *Let us confound their*
Language, says *Moses*, *that they may not UN-*
DERSTAND one anothers SPEECH.
 What need we recurr to a Metaphor when
 the literal Interpretation is neither unworthy
 of God, nor unsuitable to his Way of govern-
 ing the World at that Time? *There was but*
Language at that Time, says *Moses*; does not
 that intimate that very soon after there were
 more? Mr. *Le Clerc*'s confounding *one Lip*,
 and *one Language* has been spoken to already.
 Let him produce one Instance where *Lip*,
 when metaphorically taken, signifies necessa-
 rily *Agreement in Opinion*, and cannot more
 commodiously be interpreted *Language*, and I
 have done. Though if that should be allow-
 ed, it does not affect the main of my Argu-
 ment, which is taken from the original Tex-
 ture of those Languages, which for some Thou-
 sands of Years have differed the most from one
 another. However since very learned and ve-
 ry good Men have formerly thought, and do
 still think otherwise, it does not become me
 to be too dogmatical. I may be mistaken,
 though I shall believe that I have spent my
 Time

Time to very excellent Purpose, if I shall what I have here said, excite abler Judges to examine this Question more thoroughly than in my Opinion it has yet been examined. If I can *fungi vice cotis*, if I *sharpen the Iron*, I am not solicitous whether I myself *cut* or not. And in proposing here, to publish the Sense I have long had of the Advantage I have received by your Friendship, which I shall always honour and value as it deserves, I shall not, I cannot lose my Aim, whatsoever I may do in any Thing else. I am, &c.

Nov. 25.
1713.



N. B. *This Discourse was printed by Mr. Chamberlayne in his Collection of Lord's-Prayers, but with great Disadvantage both to the Author and the Reader. The frequent Mistakes committed it, were so obvious, that they could not escape without Censure. And I thought it but Justice due to Dr. Wotton's Memory, to give an Edition as it came from his own Hand.*

Just Published,

DR. Wotton's Edition of the WELSH LAWS, with a GLOSSARY, explaining the *Welsh* Law Terms; an APPENDIX of original Records; and a PREFACE, containing an Enquiry into the State of the *Provincial Britains*, and the Nature of the WELSH LAWS, wherein Mr. Somner's Arguments against the *Welsh Gavelkind* are examined, the Original of our *Grand and Petty Juries* accounted for, the different Opinions of our Antiquaries concerning the Value of the *Saxon Pound* reconciled, and several Mistakes in our Historians corrected.

